

## Legend of Nine Dragons and Two Tigers: An Example of City Temples and Blocks in Beijing\*

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Xi JU

Beijing Normal University, CHINA

### Abstract:

*Peking Temple Survey Schedule* in Capital Library of China recorded the saying of “nine dragons, two tigers and one stele”, this legend still spread in the old residents in Xizhimen Street 西直门大街. Through the history research and fieldwork, this essay finds out the exact meaning of nine dragons and two tigers and the relationship with the temples, wells in Xizhimen Street. We find three characteristics of the temples in Beijing inner city through the legend: First, the temples have complicated responsibilities, clear objects and class attributes, which is the important reason for the great number of temples in Beijing. Second, the people have their own view and imagination towards the city landscape, this kind of special sense has some difference with the upper class. Finally, temples are not only served for the diverse religious and social needs of the residents, but also the basement of constructing their urban spatial aesthetics, the temples communicates the secular and gods, they are also the junction of city and universe. Based on the understanding and arrangement of the real temples, citizens construct their unique cosmic order.

**Key Words:** Inner City of Beijing, Temple, Dragon and Tiger

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## 1. WHAT IS “NINE DRAGONS, TWO TIGERS AND ONE STELE”?<sup>1</sup>

*Peking Temple Survey Schedule* in Capital Library is the police investigation records of Beijing temples made in the 34 year of the republic of China (1945). Although named as “Peking temple survey”, it mainly recorded the unknown small temples along the streets, such as Earth Temples, Dragon King Temples, in reverse, the famous temples are not recorded. Except the name, location, gods, general shape and structure, the relating folklores and anecdotes of the small temples were occasionally mentioned in the records. A records about “Five Holy Shrine” (五圣祠) in Jia 70, Xizhimen (西直门) South Street (gate number in Republic of China) was quite interesting.

The record was very simple, it said that the “Five Holy Shrine” commonly known as Tiger Temple, which only had one hall, enshrine black tiger, Xuan Tan(玄坛, Military God of Wealth), Civil God of Wealth(文财神), God of Earth and God of Medicine King. It was a street temple, located at crossroad, with one stone tiger outside, it was one of the two tigers in the Peking legend “nine dragons and two tigers”.<sup>2</sup> However, the record of “nine dragons, two tigers and one stele” had never shown in any Beijing local gazetteers and stories. The writer finally got the content of the legend-----nine dragons and two tigers around Xizhimen, from a nearly 90 year old man with the family name Yang, who currently lives in Xizhimen Street.

According to this old man, Xizhimen Street formerly named as Nine Dragon and Two Tiger Street, because it had nine Dragon King Temples and Two Tiger Temples. Since too many year passed, the temples disappeared, he only knows three Dragon King Temples in the north part of Xizhimen Inner Street, and one of two Tiger Temples, which is just the Earth Temple in the South Street. The location of the other tigers and dragons perhaps are not known by anyone. The so called “nine dragons, two tigers and one stele” describes the unique landscape of Xizhimen Street, in reality, it also reflects the great number of temples in the whole Beijing city. However, the exact location and situation of the tigers and dragons are not known today, which arouses the great interest of the writer.

To understand the exact meaning of “nine dragons, two tigers and one stele” is not only to search for the unknown old stories, but also to reconstruct the historical and religious landscape of the old capital city from the legend, more importantly, this legend contains very rich indigenous knowledge and collective memory. Through the understanding of the content and recover the meaning of the legend, we could know how Beijing people feel, comprehend and memorize the city. In today’s Beijing, urban construction and old capital protection seek common development, real understanding of people’s expectation towards the city while

<sup>1</sup> The following temples are all appeared in *Temples and Steles in the Beijing Inner City*, in order to make a better understanding, this essay will select the important information from it. See Dong Xiaoping 董晓萍 and Marianne Bujard eds, *Temples and Steles in the Beijing Inner City* 北京内城寺庙碑刻志 (vol1, vol2) (Beijing, 2011) .

<sup>2</sup> *Peking Temple Survey Schedule* 北平寺院调查一览表 in Capital Library, 1945, p. 11.

exploring the religious culture that shared and inherited by the general public, is of great significance to promote the urban construction, residential acceptance, and the balance between new city development and old city protection.

Therefore, in the following part, this essay will first find out the exact meaning of “nine dragons, two tigers and one stele” through the historical research and fieldwork, uncover the veil of the old legend and check the temples in Xizhimen Street. Secondly, this essay will analyze the meaning behind the legend, discusses the position and function of the temple in the city, and try to analyze the city landscape in people’s imagination through the legend, not only for academic research, but also provide some folk perspective for today’s urban construction.

## 1.1 Nine Dragons

Among the nine gates in Beijing, Xizhimen is known as the gate of water because the carriage of fresh spring water from West Mountain for the emperor came in and out through it, in fact, that’s not the only bond between Xizhimen Street and the water. Wang Jianmin said in his article *Xizhimen and the Historic Remains in Xizhimen Inner Street*: “Xizhimen Inner Street has been the important royal travel routes, with water splashing and loess paving (on the north side of the street, once had seven isometric wells, specially used for splashing road, at ordinary time, they are locked with iron cover and can’t be used by ordinary people, the loess for paving road came from the village called big willow outside Xizhimen.).”<sup>3</sup> There were many wells on the street, what’s more, on the two sides of the street, North Siyanjing(北四眼井), Gaojing Hutong(高井胡同) are also named from wells. Since the prosperity of the wells, the stores owned wells sold water (Shui Wo Zi 水窝子) and Dragon King Temples were also numerous. Through all possible research, the author finds that the number of the Dragon King Temple is really big, from north to south, they were as follows:

### (1) Longquan Nunnery(龙泉庵)

Longquan Nunnery, located in today’s No. 11, Xizhimennei North Shuncheng Street(西直门内北顺城街), north of Huapi Chang(桦皮厂), west of Qian and Houtaoyuan (前后桃园). We don’t know when it originally built, but during Yongzheng period in Qing Dynasty, this temple had been registered in *Beijing Temple(Nunnery) and Monk(Nuns) Inventory* (六城寺庙庵院僧尼清册) made by Senglusi(僧录司), at that time, monk Guangshan was the abbot, the temple only had four palace halls and four abodes.<sup>4</sup> It was almost the same as the temple structure depicted in *Qianlong Complete Maps of Beijing* (乾隆京城全图), so this temple was not big since the middle of Qing Dynasty. During the Republic of China, the temple had no more records and it was supposed to be destroyed for a long time. <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Wang Jianmin 王建民, “Xizhimen and the Historic Remains in Xizhimen Inner Street”, *Memory of Xicheng 西城追忆*, 2006 (3) .

<sup>4</sup> *Beijing Temple (Nunnery) and Monk (Nuns) Inventory* in CASS, Sixth year of Yongzheng(1728).

<sup>5</sup> See Dongxiaoping 董晓萍 and Marianne Bujard eds, *Temples and Steles in the Beijing Inner City* 北京内城寺庙碑刻志, vol2 (Beijing, 2011) , p. 831.

## (2) Shegutang Guanyin Nunnery(赦孤堂观音庵) and Dragon Temple

It was a street temple with only one room located in today's No 1, Qiantaoyuan. In the junction of Maxiang Hutong (马相胡同) and Qiantaoyuan, there was a Guanyin Nunnery, a branch of Jingye Temple(净业寺) on the north side of Houhai(后海) during late Qing period. There was originally a small temple in the southeast corner in front of the nunnery, inside were the clay statues of Dragon King and Earth God, with two boys stood beside, a well was just in front of the temple gate.<sup>6</sup> Today, the old site of the small Dragon King Temple and Guanyin Nunnery has already been replaced by residential area, but in the memory of the old residents nearby, several decades ago, the area was low lying and the wells here were numerous, the above mentioned Longquan Nunnery and this small Dragon King Temple are possibly related with this kind environment.

## (3) Xinjiekou Dragon King Temple(新街口龙王庙)

It was located in No 4, Xinjiekou Avenue, an official temple originally built by imperial order in the seventh year of Yongzheng (1729). According to a famous local gazetteer of Beijing named “*Ri xia jiu wen kao*”(日下旧闻考), the Dragon King Temple located in the east of Inner Xizhimen Street, built by the order of Emperor Shizong in the seventh year of Yongzheng, in the eighteenth year of Qianlong(1753), change to glazed tile, and rebuilt by imperial order in the thirty-eighth year of Qianlong(1773).<sup>7</sup> In the thirty-fifth year of Qianlong(1770), Imperial Household Department(Neiwufu, 内务府) checked the official temples, this Dragon King Temple owned one temple gate, three palace halls, seven abodes, six shop buildings, the whole temple was generally good and no external rental housing.<sup>8</sup> In front of the temple gate, there was a well. However, since the end of Qing Dynasty, the temple gradually fell into ruin. In the twentieth year of Republic of China (1931), abbot Tongquan demolished several halls and sold all the wood and tiles to Deli Wood Factory, since then, the temple structure enormously changed, but Tongquan was still on debt. Finally, the temple property was sold to Shefan Temple(舍饭寺) and became a branch of it.<sup>9</sup> Until 1960s, residents gradually moved into the temple, the Dragon King Temple became a residential courtyard, some of the buildings preserved up to now but the well has been filled.

## (4) Dragon King Temple beside North Guangji Temple(北广济寺龙王庙)

This Dragon King Temple formerly located in No 85, Xizhimen Inner Street (address in Republic of China), where is an opening place in front of Xinjiekou Cinema today, not far from

<sup>6</sup> See *Peking National Institute Temple Survey Records*, Shenguyuan, Xisi 19, 1931-1933.

<sup>7</sup> See (Qing) Yu Minzhong 于敏中 eds, *Ri Xia Jiu Wen Kao* 日下旧闻考, vol 52, (Beijing, 1981), p. 840.

<sup>8</sup> *List of Reported Official Temple Hall(Room) numbers* 呈报官管寺庙殿宇房间书目清单 in *The First Historical Archives of China* 中国第一历史档案馆, May 22, Qianlong 35, Archive Number: 05-0277-032.

<sup>9</sup> See *Peking Bureau of Social Affairs, Temple Property Registering Report by Monk Wuxiu of Inner Four District Dragon Temple and the Comment of Peking Bureau of Social Affairs* (北平市社会局 内四区龙王庙僧人悟修登记庙产的呈文及社会局的批示) in *Beijing Archives*, Archive Number: J2-8-423.

North Guangji Temple. It cannot be found in any historical document, however, the old residents nearby clearly remembered the public well there, behind the well was a Dragon King Temple with broken statue. It had been the shelter for the poor rickshaw puller. In 1950s, the well was abandoned and the temple collapsed

(5) Dragon King Temple in Gaojing Hutong(高井胡同龙王庙)

This temple was formerly on the east side of the south entrance of Gaojing Hutong. It was also a Dragon King Temple built beside the well for offering sacrifice to Gods. It was demolished in 1950s and became an opening place now.

(6) Dragon King Temple in North Caochang Hutong(北草厂胡同龙王庙)

This temple was originally on the north side of Xizhimen Street, outside North Caochang Hutong, around today's No 213 Xizhimen Inner Street. The well water in front of the temple are allowed to be used by the people nearby for free. There were also some poor people sojourn in the temple. Around 1958, the well was filled by North Caochang Food Store and rebuilt the house, thereafter, the temple disappeared.

Note: This three Dragon King temple above-mentioned haven't been recorded in any document, only exist in the memory of the old residents. However, in the police investigation in 1945, a Dragon King Temple in No. 29 Xinjiekou Avenue (address in Republic of China) was indeed recorded, the temple had one room, south-faced, dedicated to Dragon King, Money God and Earth God. <sup>10</sup>Since the gate number changed a lot, it really hard to know which temple is the recorded one.

(7) Longquan Chanlin(龙泉禅林)

This temple was also called Longquan Nunnery or Longquan Temple, located around No 27 Guanyingyuan(冠英园). A gazetteer of Beijing published in 1593, *Wan Shu Za Ji*(宛署杂记) recorded a longquan An in the west lane of the river channel "built in the thirty-eighth year of Jiajing(1559)"<sup>11</sup> but we don't know whether it was the temple or not. At least, it was definitely recorded in Qing Dynasty, the five sacrificial utensils in the temple were added in the twenty-second year of Daoguang (1842). There was one well in front of the front hall inside the temple gate, that was the reason why the temple named "Longquan", This temple also offered sacrifice to the Dragon King in the front hall together with Emperor Guan (关帝). The old residents said that the well water had very good quality, all the nuns relied on the water. During the Cultural Revolution, nuns left the temple. In 1995, a new residential area was built there, since then, the temple building and the well thoroughly vanished.

(8) Mituo Temple(弥陀寺)

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<sup>10</sup> *Peking Temple Survey Schedule* in Capital Library, 1945, p. 34.

<sup>11</sup> See (Ming) Shen Bang 沈榜 ed, *Shu Wan Za Ji* 宛署杂记, (Beijing, 1983), p. 230.

Mituo Temple was called Longquan Nunnery or Longquan Temple until Kangxi Period, located in 51 Xijiekou Avenue. *Wan Shu Za Ji* said “Longquan An, one was in Mingyufang(鸣玉坊), the temple was built by Jinyiwei Qianhu(锦衣卫千户) Li Guang in the thirty-fifth year of Jiajing.”<sup>12</sup> Hence, this temple was possibly built in the thirty-fifth year of Jiajing (1556). In the sixtieth year of Kangxi (1721), officials from several institutes of government in Beijing, chanted scriptures in the temple to congratulate the emperor’s birthday. At that time, the temple was still called “Longquan”.<sup>13</sup> But in first month of the fifth year of Jiaqing (1800), Manchu first class guard Getongqing(格同青) and other good men repaired the temple together and set the lintel for the west hall, the temple name was recorded as “Baoen Mituo Temple”(报恩弥陀寺)<sup>14</sup>. The well, as a well-known water shop, was originally inside the temple, the well water had the advantages of high quality and big capacity. At the end of Qing, this temple changed to a branch of Ciyin Temple(慈因寺), the number of monks reduced. As a result, a Shandong Water seller whose family name was Wang rented the well and lived on water selling, he also built a small Dragon King Temple behind the well. Up to now, the building of Mituo Temple still preserved, but the well had been filled while the Dragon King Temple disappeared

#### (9) Banbi Street Dragon King Temple 半壁街龙王庙

This Dragon King Temple was also called Wudao Temple(五道庙, Temple of Five Gods of Tao), which also disappeared. The original location was in the northeast corner of the crossing of Qianbanbi Street and Xizhimen South Street. In 1930s, the researcher of Peking National Institute said the temple was south faced, with only one room, on the gate, a wood plaque inscribed “Virtues spreads everywhere”(德润万方). It made offerings to three clay statues, Dragon King, Earth God and Mountain God, with another six stand statues of boys on both sides.<sup>15</sup> Same records had kept in the police investigation in 1945, however, the ritual implements and the affiliated houses no longer exist compared to a decade ago.<sup>16</sup> According to the memories of the old residents, the well in front of the temple was a water shop (jing wo zi 井窝子), the seller’s water channel was just in Banbi Street.

The nine temples above mentioned are as the following picture:

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Kangxi *Wan Shou Sheng Dian Tu* 康熙万寿盛典图, see 瀧本弘之 *Beijing City Atlas in Qing Dynasty*, (Tokyo, 2002), p. 73.

<sup>14</sup> See *Peking National Institute Temple Survey Records, Mituo Temple, Xisi 30, 1931-1933.*

<sup>15</sup> See *Peking National Institute Temple Survey Records, Dragon King temple, Xisi 41, 1931-1933.*

<sup>16</sup> *Peking Temple Survey Schedule* n Capital Library, 1945, p. 34.

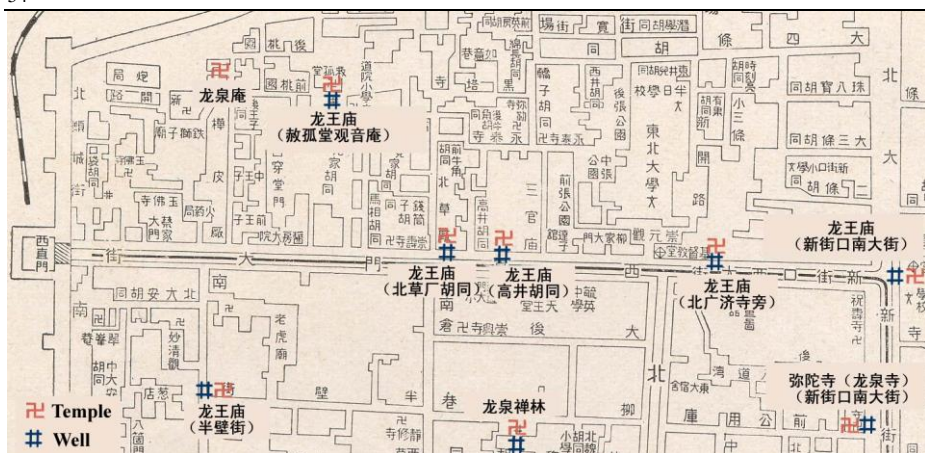


Fig. 1 Nine Dragon Temples near Xizhimen Street<sup>17</sup>

Of Course, the nine dragon temples above may not one-to-one corresponding to the “nine dragons” in the legend, in fact, perhaps, the so-called “nine dragons” is just an unreliable number, that is the distinguishing feature of the information provided in the oral stories. However, starting from the legend, we do find a magnificent number of wells and Dragon King Temples near Xizhimen Street when searching for the old places. That is just the point of view put forward in the beginning part of this essay: the essence of this legend is the public impression and memory of urban landscape, it provides some historical information and more points out the nature of street landscape in people’s mind. In other words, the research on this legend is just the study on the way that the common people recognize a city.

## 1.2 Two Tigers

As mentioned above, “nine dragons, two tigers and a stele”, one tiger is for certain, that is the Five Holy Shrine in *Peking Temple Survey Schedule*. The temple does not exist today, it formerly located in 56 Houbanbi Street(后半壁街), where is now the location of Xizhimen store of Beijing Mobile. Its original constructing time is unknown, but it was mapped in *Complete Maps of Beijing* in the fifteenth year of Qianlong (1750), the hutong where the temple located named “Mao Jia Wan”(茅家湾).<sup>18</sup> But in a late 19<sup>th</sup> century gazetteer, *Capital City Street and Alley*(京师坊巷志稿) it was called “Tiger Temple”, from what we can know that the tiger temple was very famous between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, even became the land mark of this district, as a result, hutong was named in the temple name. Meanwhile, the name “Mao Jia Wan” was still in use, in *Baqi Orientation Diagram* attached to *Chen Yuan Shi*

<sup>17</sup> *Beijing Street and Alley Outline* (北京街衢坊巷之概略) is the master copy of this picture. Beijing Special Municipality ed, *Beijing Street and Alley Outline*, publishing date is unknown, in the Republic period. This copy is kept in the Capital Library, China.

<sup>18</sup> *Qianlong Complete Maps of Beijing* 乾隆京城全图, Peking: Investigation branch of Government Affair Bureau, Huabei Communication Department, Japan’s Asia Development Board, printed in reduced format (1:2600), 17 volumes, 1940.

*Lve*, (宸垣识略) written in the second year of Guangxu (1876), the name of this hutong was still noted as “Mao Jia Wan”. According to *Peking National Institute Temple Survey Records* in 1930s, Five Holy Shrine was in south side of Tiger Temple Hutong, it had one palace hall, west faced, with five statues of God inside, clay Buddha, God of Medicine King, God of Earth Civil and Military Money God. There was a locust tree in front of the temple. A stone tiger was settled in front of this tree, three feet, yellow and black color, In addition, on the left side of the temple gate, there was a flag pole.<sup>19</sup>



Fig. 2 Five Holy Shine, photograph taken by Academy of Beiping, 1930-1931. Kept in private Collection

*Folktale Collection of Xicheng District* (西城故事集成) has recorded the legend about the stone tiger, the outline is as follows:

*Earth God Temple in South Xiaojie only had one room and a flag pole with a rectangle apricot flag, which embroidered four black word “Bless the Place”. Every first and fifteenth day of the month, prayers flooded the temple, the temple wall were full of red and yellow strips of cloth and redeem banners. On the right side of the temple gate, there was a white marble tiger, so the temple named “Tiger Temple”. Some month in some year, the pork shop in the north entrance of South Street was stolen frequently, the shop owner from Shandong kept watch at night in order to catch the thief. On the seventh day, the shop owner saw a white light enter into the shop, he hurt it with knife. On the next day, people saw some fresh meat beside the stone tiger and the tiger’s back was hurt by knife. From now on, the tiger never made trouble, and the*

<sup>19</sup> See *Peking National Institute Temple Survey Records, Five Holy Shrine, Xisi 43, 1931-1933.*



temple enjoyed more incense. However, the shop owner got ill and the pork shop finally closed.<sup>20</sup>

This story is widely known among the old Beijing People who live near Xizhimen South Street. When the author do the fieldwork in this area, several old men have told me that the three scar on the back of the tiger was quite conspicuous, all old neighbors have seen that in their childhood. The stone tiger disappeared until the renovation of the street in 1990s.

Another tiger should be inside Iron Lion Temple(铁狮子庙) located in the north side of Xizhimen Street. On the north side of Xizhimen Street, there is a hutong called Iron Lion Hutong. According to the description of *Complete Maps of Beijing*, this temple named Zhenwu Temple during Qianlong Period, it also named Xuandi Temple(玄帝庙) or Shengyin Temple(圣因寺). As for the “Iron Lion Temple”, this commonly known name originated from the two iron lions in the temple, which still exist until the Republic time. The north hall of the temple mainly made offerings to Zhen Wu and Xuan Tan(玄坛)<sup>21</sup>, Xuan Tan referred to Zhao Gongming(赵公明), a statue riding on a tiger, the black tiger in “Five Holy Shrine” was just his ride. On the right of the north hall was a stele with a tiger head—Xuan Di Temple Stele in the twenty-ninth year of Daoguang(1849).<sup>22</sup> All that shows the second tiger should be this Iron Lion Temple that dedicated to Xuantan.

Note: Iron Lion temple does not exist today, the former location is building 16, Yutaoyuanyiqu(玉桃园一区), but the founding time cannot be verified. According to Zhenwu Temple Stele: one year, the houses and statues in the temple were all broken, Jiang Guozhi(姜国志), who was a kind believer lived in this area, led a group of people to make the renovation, the residents and shops nearby donated to this project one after another, and set a stele as witness.<sup>23</sup> Seven years later, still led by Jiang Zhiguo, people lived nearby donated again to “repair the front hall”, “add east and west chambers, monk rooms” “built the holy statues of King Yao 尧君, God of Medicine King, God of Wealth and God of Fire”, these recorded in Xuan Di Temple Stele. In the early days of the Republic period, this temple became the family temple of a common people named Zhao Huachen 赵华臣, in the twenty-ninth year of Republic of China (1940), Zhao Huachen donated the temple to Monk Rongding who came from Anhui province and practice Buddhism in Cuifeng Temple 翠峰寺 located in Inner Xizhimen. Rongding changed the temple name to “Shengyin Temple” 圣因寺. The temple buildings still existed until 1950s, once used as the embroider factory of this street, the statue of God and the

<sup>20</sup> See *Folktale Collection of Xicheng District* 北京西城区民间文学故事集成, vol1, mimeograph, p. 9-10.

<sup>21</sup> See *Peking National Institute Temple Survey Records, Iron Tiger Temple, Xisi18, 1931-1933*.

<sup>22</sup> Xuandi Temple Stele 玄帝庙碑. Beijing Library Inscription Department 北京图书馆金石组, ed. *China Inscription and Calligraphy Compilation of Past Dynasties in Beijing Library* 北京图书馆藏中国历代石刻拓本汇编, Vol 81, (Zhengzhou, 1990-1991), p. 173.

<sup>23</sup> See Zhenwu Temple Stele 真武庙碑. Beijing Library Inscription Department, ed. *China Inscription and Calligraphy Compilation of Past Dynasties in Beijing Library* 北京图书馆藏中国历代石刻拓本汇编, Vol 81, (Zhengzhou, 1990-1991), p.56.

lion lost during the “Cultural Revolution” and the buildings of the temple were dismantled in 1990s.<sup>24</sup>

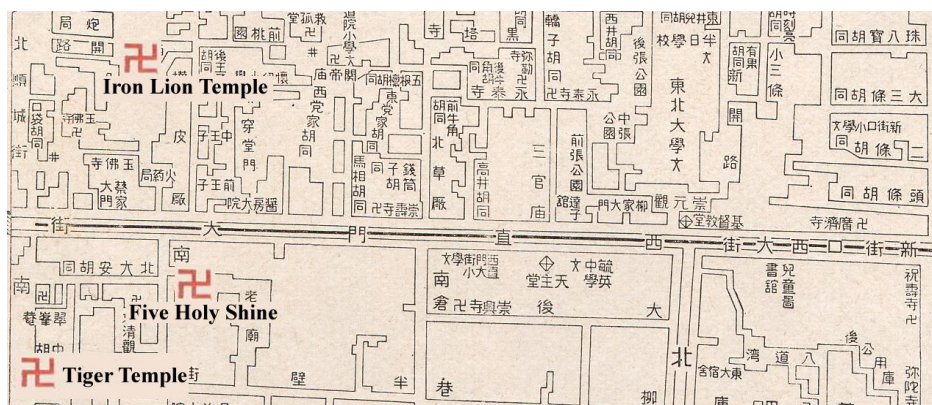


Fig. 3 Two Tiger Temples near Xizhimen Street

### 1.3 One Stele

Like the temple, the stele around Xizhimen Street is also numerous. Only roughly search in *China Inscription and Calligraphy Compilation of Past Dynasties in Beijing Library* and Chorography, 13 steles have been found in this area. Among all these steles, the two stele-blank stele and the Stele made by the order of Emperor Qianlong (乾隆御制碑) in Chongxuan Guan were both big and legendary, which can be considered as the place of interests. Perhaps, the stele was the “one stele” but there is another place called “Stele Yard” (石碑大院) in Xizhimen Street, where also famous for the stone stele. Between the sites Grape Yard (葡萄院) and Five Purlins (五根檩), there is a small north-south alley called “Stele Yard”. This alley got its name from the big stone stele. This name have already been recorded in *Capital City Street and Alley*.<sup>25</sup> According to Liu Jianbin, the stele existed until the “Cultural Revolution”, afterwards, it vanished along with its name in the high buildings.<sup>26</sup> We find a stele near stele yard really had a rubbing by consulting *Beijing Library Inscription Department, ed. China Inscription and Calligraphy Compilation of Past Dynasties in Beijing Library*. That was Wanfo Temple (万佛寺) Stele once stood in Wanfo Temple. It was carved in the nineteenth year of Daoguang, the inscription related the story of Monk Shengpei from south of Yangtze River, when Shengpei came to Beijing, he practiced Buddhism in Wanfo Temple and cost two years’ time for fundraising, with the money, Wanfo Temple was finally rebuilt.<sup>27</sup> However, this stele rubbing

<sup>24</sup> See Dongxiaoping 董晓萍 and Marianne Bujard eds, *Temples and Steles in the Beijing Inner City* 北京内城寺庙碑刻志, vol2 (Beijing, 2011), p. 832-833.

<sup>25</sup> (Qing) Zhu Yixin 朱一新, *Capital City Street and Alley* 京师坊巷志稿, vol.1, (Beijing, 1982), p. 153.

<sup>26</sup> Liu Jianbin 刘建斌, "Qiong Xi Bei Tao" 穷西北套, *Memory of Xicheng* 西城追忆, 2006(4).

<sup>27</sup> Wanfo Temple Stele 万佛寺碑, *Beijing Library Inscription Department, ed. China Inscription and Calligraphy Compilation of Past Dynasties in Beijing Library* 北京图书馆藏中国历代石刻拓本汇编, Vol. 80, (Zhengzhou, 1990-1991), p. 174.

was only more than one meter, still leave some distance to “big” stone stele. Since the stele vanished along with its name, so we still need further research on what it really is.

In general, although the first time for the saying “Nine Dragons and Two Tigers around Xizhimen” appear in document was the rough description in the police investigation records in 1945, it was widely spread among the local people for a long time. Through clarifying the concrete indication of “nine dragons and two tigers”, we can find that all related temples existed before 1930s, some temples (Longquan An) even disappeared in the Republic Period, hence, “nine dragon” should appeared before the period of Republic. With the saying “Nine Dragons and Two Tigers around Xizhimen”, if we want to go further to discuss the relationship between temple and city, we should fix the time range between the period of late Qing and the Republic.

## 2. STREET LEGEND AND IDENTITY OF CITY TEMPLE

Nine Dragon and Two Tigers Street is an “elegant name” bestowed by the people through the way of legend. We can find the following three questions when concluding the referents of nine Dragon King Temples and two Tiger Temples.

- (1) Xizhimen Street is one of the most important communication lines in Beijing. It is not only the way that must be passed from Beijing to the West Mountain, but also have many prince palaces and public buildings, but why the citizens choose the temple to name the street?
- (2) Temples were numerous on both sides of Xizhimen Street, many of them are famous, such as North Guangji Temple 北广济寺 which was closely related with the imperial family, Chongxuan Guan 崇玄观, which had prosperous religious and folklore activities in its temple fairs. However, all of them not belong to the eleven temples involved in nine dragons and two tigers. Why the citizens don't choose the temple with bigger fame and more religious activities to be the landmark of the street?
- (3) Dragon and tiger are the most emblematic image in Chinese traditional concept of Feng Shui(风水). What is the meaning behind the connection of a street and “dragon and tiger”?

In a word, the temples named “dragon and tiger” became the symbols of a street, the religious idea and practice of the Beijing citizens which had been represented by this phenomenon are interesting, the following part of this paper will talk about it from the significance of the temple, the temple division and the cosmic view of citizens.

### 2.1 Significance of the Temple

It is a commonly accepted that temple is the important public architecture in the city, but in the discourse system of the intellectuals, temples are less important than official buildings and

prince palaces, at most, temples are paralleled to them. No matter in *Ri Xia Jiu Wen Kao* or *Guangxu Shuntian Fu Zhi* 光绪顺天府志, or *Yan Du Cong Kao* 燕都丛考 which finished in Republic Period, the gazetteers usually record the various buildings in the city according to azimuth, palace, official building and temple are the most important. Important temples, palaces and government offices are usually in parallel, as a result, temples become the landmark of the street or block in the city. The literary quotation “Nine dragons and two tigers around Xizhimen Street” tells us that in the minds of common people, temple is not only more important than the public architecture, such as government officials and school, but also more qualified to be the landmark than the big architecture, such as the palaces and big gardens. .

There is always no lack of important buildings in Xizhimen Street, in the middle of Qing Dynasty, the Palace of Beile Qiulin(贝勒球琳府)was in the east entrance, the Palace of Prince Xun (恂郡王府) was in the middle. In the period of the Republic, the Palace of Prince and Beile declined, but lots of public buildings appeared in both sides of the street, only take the map in *Outlines of Beijing Street and Alley* (《北京街衢坊巷の概略》,1937-1938)for example, from east to west, several big public places were marked, Children’s Library, Yuying Middle School, Catholic Church, Primary School of Xizhimen Street, etc. However, Prince Palace, Library or school, even the church which was totally different from the traditional Chinese city landscape, none of them have become the landmark of Xizhimen Street. See picture 5.

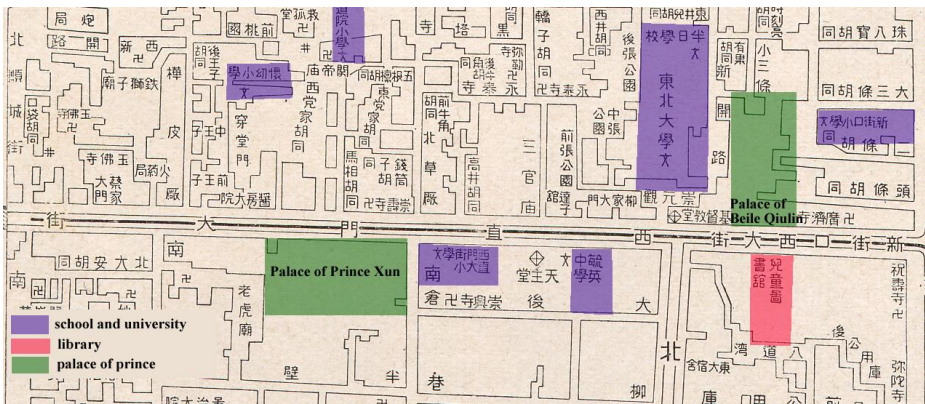


Fig. 5 The Palaces and Public Architectures near Xizhimen Street

Only temples, especially the small ones, had become the “name” of this street. It means that for the ordinary citizens, the small temples had very important significance for them, perhaps including three facets as following:

First of all, temple is the place where Gods lived, religious is of course the most important value. In the traditional society, “make offerings to God as God is there” is the common rule that accepted by different social class, as a result, it is reasonable to consider the temple—“where God lived” as a special space. As a matter of fact, the religious holiness is not all of the meaning of temple. Except for the abode of God, temple is also holy for its

relationship with the history, and is “important” because of its relationship with the public life. Even we can say, to the common people, the latter two could be a more dominant level in the significance of the temple.

Temple is a place of collective memory, it truly exists in people’s view and also connect the local tradition together with the community history. That’s the second origin of the significance of temple. From what we discussed above, every temple belongs to the nine dragons and two tigers has shouldered the history of the local people. Some of the history passed down orally (legend of the tiger temple in south street, legend of “nine dragons and two tigers”), which is the way for people to remember the local history. Some of the history carved on the stone stele and religious instruments, it can make the people who come to the temple always feel the accumulation of time, through reading the stele, people can touch the imprint of the ancestors who have lived here, in particular to the decedents of these people, it means a lot, including symbolic capital and social capital. Some of the history even step into the elite discourse system, passed down by gazetteers and literati writing. Temples are certainly included in gazetteer, the important ones usually juxtaposed with palace and government offices, because the statue of God, religious instruments and stele inscriptions embody great historical and cultural value, so gazetteer take the temples as key content. All these different narrative method of history focus on the temple, finally, temples become the place of tradition and collective memory and thus obtain the meaning close to holy.

At last, this kind of temple also has the nature of public, they are constantly in contact with people’s daily life and could be their final shelter when they are involved in the crisis. In comparison with the palaces and schools, the importance of the temple is unparalleled. Although the palaces are beautiful and imposing, for the ordinary citizens, they are only private forbidden area where can never step into. Their existence are no more than some big blank on the sides of the street. Needless to say, schools are public buildings and have close relationship with daily life, but the people they served are targeted. Particularly, they appear mostly after the period of Republic, in an era and area with very low literacy and enrollment rate, for the residents in Xizhimen Street, school was “exception” but not “convention”. By contrast, the function of temple is more about daily life and the temple is known as the public space. From our investigation, the religious and social function of the nine dragons and two tigers are as follows:

- (1) Resource Utilization and Management. The so-called “nine dragons” are all Dragon King Temples along with wells. In the sense of religion, they are shrines that make offerings to the Dragon King, meanwhile, they are “Shui Wo Zi” used for water-taking, an indispensable place in the daily life of the residents nearby. Build a temple for the well was actually related with the social management of Shui Fu (水夫)organization which need to be discussed in other article.

- (2) Pray for Health. Dragon King Temple mainly make offerings to the Dragon King while Tiger Temple mainly to God of Wealth, but there always a place for God of Medicine King, especially in the two Tiger Temples. According to Xuandi Temple Stele, in the twenty-eighth year of Daoguang (1848), the statue of Medicine King was added when the temple was renovated. The Tiger Temple in the South Street also had the Medicine King Statue, the saying such as “blessed the children” showed on the banners hanged in the temple, so it also related with the protection of children.
- (3) Social Aid. Many temples in Beijing had played the role of social aid in the old times, such as the well-known Shefan Temple. On the sides of the Xizhimen Street, this kind of temple was also numerous, such as Shegu Tang Guanyin An. We can know from the temple names that they were responsible for orphan relief and funerals. Several small Dragon King Temples with only one room were also the shelter for the homeless.
- (4) Complement of Ethical Society. The basic structure of Chinese society was an ethical society composed by patriarchal consanguinity. As a result, there must be a considerable number of people being excluded from the social structure, the widows who lose the male family member and the old unmarried girls as representative. These females obtain the stable and legal social identity by devoting to religious life. This phenomenon was highlighted especially in Beijing. Because of the Booi system of the “Eight Banners”(八旗包衣制度), a great number of Manchu girl were selected as maidservant to the imperial court or prince palace. They could not be free until twenty-five, at that age, most of them lose the best opportunities for marriage and they even cannot live with their parents or brothers, then they usually lived in the temple, Chongyang Nunnery in Dashiqiao Hutong(大石桥胡同重阳庵), Cuifeng Nunnery(翠峰庵) were just the gathering place for these girls. Iron Lion Temple and Longquan Temple in Xizhimen Street were both nunnery with a big number of nuns inside. This kind of women who were out of the ethical society might be included in these nuns.

In addition to the temples of nine dragons and two tigers, the well-known temple Chongxuan Guan, namely “Cao Laogong Guan”(曹老公观) among the common people, was also in Xizhimen Street. It can be regarded as an outstanding model for the temple’s public nature. At least from the period of Qianlong, temple fair was held from the first day to tenth day in every January of the lunar year, the temple fair still existed even after the temple was abandoned. From the dairy of a Manchu Writer named Song Yun(松筠) who lived in the period of Jiaqing and Daoguang, the temple fair was prosperous, although only once a year, the scale was immense. When the temple fair began, even the Huguo Temple 护国寺 cannot share the spotlight.

Temple undertakes various public functions in the traditional urban society, they are not only meet the important signal requirement of people’s daily life, but also the necessary supplement

to the main structure of “family-country”, so temples are particularly important. As for the significance endowed with, temples have carried much weight compared with other buildings. So that can be explained why people choose temple to be the landmark of Xizhimen Street rather than other buildings.

## 2.2 Temple Division and Civic Life

As above mentioned, temple was quite important to the citizens of Beijing in the old times. However, there comes a question that why naming the street with these temples rather than others?

In addition to temples belong to nine dragons and two tigers, there were several famous temple on the two sides of Xizhimen Street. This essay will make a simple introduction to these well-known temples which located in Xizhimen Street but not belong to nine dragons and two tigers.

### 2.2.1 Yongtai Temple 永泰寺

Yongtai Temple was originally built in Yuan Dynasty. In the eighth year of Zhengtong (1443), Earl Xiuwu(修武伯) took the lead to renovate the temple. It was given the name “Yong Tai” during the Tianshun Period. During the period of Qianlong in Qing Dynasty, the temple was magnificent with three sets of buildings and often donated by the dignitaries. After the tenth year of the Republic (1921), several organizations established in the temple, such as Peking General Buddhist Association of Wutai Mountain 北平五台山普济佛教总会, Peking Eternal Virtue Headquarter 北平恒善总社, etc. Monks from Wutai Mountain permanently practice Buddhism inside, this temple had fifty-four and a half houses, not small in scale. In 1950s, the God statues from the nearby temples have been settled here.

### 2.2.2 Chongxuan Guan 崇玄观

Chongxuan Guan, commonly known as “Cao Laogong Guan” The stele with *Poem about Burning Incense in Chongyuan Guan made by Emperor Order* 《崇元观御制拈香即事诗》, written by emperor Qianlong was inside the temple. This temple originally built in the second year of Tianshun (1458) in Ming Dynasty and was repaired in the twenty-third year of Qianlong(1758). It was big and magnificent. Temple fairs were hold during the first to tenth day of January every lunar year, during the period of Republic, the temple was replaced by Military Academy and the stele stone was moved to Stone Carving Art Museum.

### 2.2.3 North Guangji Temple 北广济寺

It was also named as Guangji Temple, which was originally built by the eminent Monk Meile in Ming Dynasty. The construction began in “Jia Zi” year of Hongzhi in Ming Dynasty (1504), and finished in the ninth year of Zhengde (1514). Since Qing Dynasty, this temple belonged to Rinzhai, a famous branch of Zen. In the sixtieth year of Kangxi (1721), it was taken as the chanting place. Ministry of Rites, Ministry of Penalty, Imperial College, Banqueting Court, Court of State Ceremonial, except the ministers, other officials from the above-mentioned

gathered here to chant sutras so as to celebrate the emperor's birthday. During the Republic Period, there were still many trees, flowers as well as ritual utensils inside the temple. At the end of the Republic period, Guangji Temple was replaced by Xinjiekou Elementary School.

#### 2.2.4 Zhushou Temple 祝寿寺

It was also called Xiangling Temple 响铃寺 or Puqing Temple 普庆寺, which was founded no late than Yuan dynasty. It was rebuilt by a eunuch in the eighth year of Zhengde in Ming Dynasty (1513). In Qing Dynasty, it was always a monk temple. In the tenth year of Republic (1921), a Daoist priest from Huoshan Sect 霍山派 purchased the temple and made the renovation. The temple was in good pattern and had everything from bell tower to drum tower, besides, it might be the sacrificial place of the paint trade guild. Unfortunately, three palace halls and several ritual utensils were burned down in the twenty-sixth year of Republic (1937) due to the electrical fire. However, the main buildings has been preserved up to now.

#### 2.2.5 Chongshou An 崇寿庵

It also named Chongshou Temple, which was founded in the thirty-fourth year of Jiajing in Ming dynasty (1555), during the period of Yongzheng and Qianlong, it had about forty rooms and belong to official temples. From the period of Jiaqing and Daoguang to the period of Guangxu, it purchased house property for several times and the temple was continuously enlarged. In the fifteenth year of Republic, Monk Huisan (慧三) who was also the abbot of Guangshan Temple in Baochan Temple Hutong 宝禅寺胡同广善寺, became the abbot, he was greatly interested in education, as a result, he established the School of Saint Enlightenment(圣化学校) inside the temple, accepted both monks and laymen. There was a white lotus stone groove, which was regarded as valuable cultural relic. The temple was totally tear down until 1995 when Xizhimen Street was renovated.

#### 2.2.6 Chongxing Temple 崇兴寺

In the thirteenth year of Guangxu (1887), the North Church moved from Canchi Kou(蚕池口)to Xishiku(西什库), Chongxing Temple, which initially located in Xishiku had to move to the south side of Xizhimen Street. Chongxing Temple was the God worship place constructed by the eunuch who guarded Xishiku in Ming Dynasty. The imperial family paid great attention on this temple during the Qing Period, Emperor Kangxi had inscribed the plaque for it by himself, during the period of Tongzhi, several prince palaces, such as Prince Li(礼亲王), Prince Zhuang(庄亲王)and Prince Fu(孚郡王)had renovated the temple together. In Guangxu Period, the connection with the imperial family stopped and it was controlled by the monks of Caodong Sect (曹洞宗), however, all the cultural relics and treasures still stored in the temple. In1950s, it still had 39 rooms, it was finally dismantled during the "Cultural Revolution".

#### 2.2.7 Cuifeng An 翠峰庵

It also named Cuifeng Temple, which was founded in the fifteenth year of Wanli in Ming Dynasty (1587), built by the head of eunuch agency of Etiquette. The first abbot of Cuifeng An



was a high-ranking Buddhist official. During the period of Yongzheng and Qianlong, it had about thirty rooms and there was a very famous opera club took the temple as their association site in late Qing. In the eleven of Republic(1922), a nun named PuXiu(普修)renovated the temple, after that, the number of halls and the rooms rose to seventy-four and there were more than twenty nuns lived in it. In the 1960s, the Cuifeng An was transformed to a factory, and in 1995, the architecture of temple was ruined.

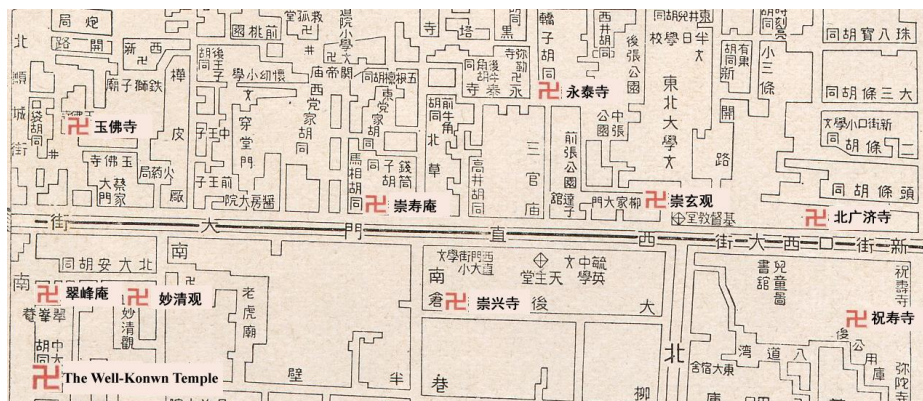


Fig. 6 the well-known temples near Xizhimen Street

The differences between these well-known temples and “nine dragons and two tigers” temples are as follows:

First of all, from the point of size and administrator, “nine dragons and two tigers” are not that kind of famous temples managed by the eminent abbot. Among the eleven related temples, seven of them were certainly without the management of the religious people, monks or Daoist priests. The Dragon King Temple inside Mituo Temple and Iron Lion Temple was administered by common people, the former was “shui wo zi” managed by the water-seller, the latter was the family temple of the citizen, while in another five even cannot find such kind of fixed administrator, they should be the small temples with collective administration. In addition, the temples with the administration of monks or Daoist priests were also small in scale, for example, Longquan An only had four rooms, Longquan Chanlin had nine. Some of them were only affiliated to other temples, Dragon King Temple in Shegutang Guanyin An was affiliated to Guanyin An, Dragon King Temple in Mituo Temple was affiliated to Mituo Temple. The only exception is the Dragon King Temple in Xijiekou Avenue, it was built by the emperor order in the seventh year of Yongzheng, though it only had one temple gate, three palace halls, it was constructed of the glazed tile, which was not cheap. In late Qing Dynasty, the Dragon King Temple had already lose its gentility as the official temple and gradually fell into ruin, as a result, the abbot dismantled the temple and sold it to others. Generally speaking, in comparison with the big temples on both sides of Xizhimen Street, which had thirty or forty

palace halls and abbot with big fame, “nine dragons and two tigers” temples were only street temples.

Secondly, unlike the famous temple as Chongxuan Guan, “nine dragons and two tigers” temples were only known in a limited area. As what discussed above, Chongxuan Guan was well-known in the capital city in Qing period, the stele made by Emperor Qianlong graced the temple while the temple fair prolonged, for instance, Song Yun(松筠) lived in Xisi (西四), he came to Chongxuan Guan every year during the temple fair. In fact, other temples like Guangji Temple and Yongtai temple were also in same situation, although without the highly involved activities like temple fair, they had visitors from Wutai Mountain and the donation from the capital dignities, so the influence was not only limited to Xizhimen area. In contrast, “nine dragons and two tigers” were only known by the people nearby. The lack of material made it difficult to define who donated the temple, from the limited materials, among the nine dragons, at least three were public wells, another two were Shui Wo Zi used for water selling. That is to say, most of the donors and users were the nearby residents. Besides, for “two tigers”, the community property were more obvious. There was only one Earth Temple in Xizhimen South Street, it offered sacrifices only to the “local God of Earth” with no connection to other places. The two stele in Iron Lion Temple showed clearly that all the donors and administrators were the nearby residents since the temple was founded. Therefore, from the sphere of influence, “nine dragons and two tigers” were still “small” temples.

Thirdly, “nine dragons and two tigers” were in face of the most “secular” part in the daily life of the citizens. Through the concrete analysis, we can easily find that the so-called dragon temple was the Dragon King Temple, all of them were near the wells and related with the water management. The so-called “tiger” temples made offerings to God of Wealth, Zhao Gongming and marked themselves with the ride of Zhao Gongming. Therefore, “dragon and tiger” actually represented the basic resources on which the citizens lived, the so-called dragon symbolized wells and water. Beijing lacks water, especially the direct drinking water with low alkalinity, namely “sweet water”. People built Dragon King Temple beside every well to offer sacrifice, which expressed the significance of the water resources. The so-called “tiger” was the ride of Xuan Tan Zhao Gongming, Zhao was Money God and the tiger can be explained as the symbol of wealth. As a capital city, Beijing is not only the center of culture and politics, but also the center of commodity and consumption. In such a consumer society, getting money or wealth is the basic condition for survival. Tiger thus represented the core resources of the civic life, which was the foundation of all the social order or landscape sequence. It can be explained why people were so impressed on the street landscape “nine dragons and two tigers”. These temples had almost nothing to do with the classic doctrines, nor speculative philosophy of religion that discussed by the eminent monks, however, they offered symbolized protection to the common people. In the minds of the common people, they are possibly the real “religion”.

In a word, through the comparison between “nine dragons and two tigers” and other temples in Xizhimen Street, we can detect that these eleven temples had something in common: small in

scale, operated and repaired by common people and small range of influence, only limited in the area near Xizhimen Street. Nonetheless, they were closely connected to the daily life of local people, at the same time, they were to some extent public, so they can become the space landmark in people's mind.

### 2.3 Cosmic View of Citizens

In the last part of this essay, I want to discuss the significance of taking “dragon and tiger” as the name of the street. As above discussed, “dragon and tiger” are firstly in reality, they were the real temples that offer sacrifices to the Dragon King and tiger. Secondly, “dragon and tiger” were also symbols, the residents worshiped the dragon and tiger, but in fact, what they really want were water and money. However, there might be another meaning for the landscape sequence represented by dragon and tiger. That is the cosmic order in the city space. Another story *Beijing City Gate and Legend* explains this view very well. In this story, Dong'an men(东安门) is on the left, belongs to black dragon(青龙), Xi'an men is on the right, belongs to white tiger. There are two relative Hutongs outside Dong'an men, named Goldfish Hutong and Good Rain Hutong(甘雨胡同), fish can change into dragon, dragon can make the rain, so they are given the name “goldfish” and “good rain”. There are also two relative Hutongs outside Xi'an men, Mutton Hutong and Brick Tower Hutong, mutton is the favorite of the tiger, feed the tiger with the mutton and the tiger will be obedient, so it was called “mutton”. When the tiger become beast, the nine-layer brick tower at the entrance of Brick Tower Hutong will be the whip which can frightened the tiger. Ancients divided the twenty-eight stars around the ecliptic into four groups, respectively represented by four animals, black dragon(青龙), white tiger(白虎), rosefinch(朱雀) and xuan wu(玄武), namely “four images”(四象). It has very long history in china and is deeply rooted in people's heart. The city landscape can also be understood as the combination of “dragon” and “tiger”, which implies the cosmic order represented by the stars, the latent meaning is the mutual promotion and restraint and the dynamic balance between yin yang 阴阳, good luck or bad luck 吉凶, dragon and tiger. From this respective, when we go back to discuss the “nine dragons and two tigers”, we can find that they are almost evenly situated on the two sides of Xizhimen Street, though the sense of direction represented by dragon and tiger is not strong, dragon and tiger are always mentioned in the same breath, that still reflects the inner consciousness of the pursuit of the harmony of yin and yang.

Generally speaking, this essay depicted the content and meaning of “nine dragons and two tigers and a stele” through the comprehensive usage of local literature, folk tale and field investigation. On the basis of the recollection of the historical landscape of Xizhimen Street, it discusses the way to recognize and memorize the urban landscape.

Some part of the essay is still in speculation due to the lacking of materials, but the worship of temple, the way of thinking in which people take animals to symbolize the survival resources and cosmic order is roughly visible. If the unique cognition of Beijing Citizens can be taken into account in the future urban landscape design, it will certainly does good to the construction and development of Beijing.

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